

USS Bienville

Bienville is a parish and town in same parish, in Louisiana, named for Governor Jean Baptiste Lemoine Bienville, son of the French explorer who accompanied La Salle on his expedition.

The USS Bienville was a side-wheel wooden steamer. She was purchased in New York on 14 August 1861 from Livingston, Crocheron and Company. Her length was 253 feet; beam, 38 feet; draft, 9 feet ^{16'2"} (light); speed, 15 knots (maximum); tonnage, 1,558; armament, eight 32-pounders, 42 cwt. She was commissioned at New York on 23 October 1861, when Captain Charles Steedman assumed command.

She was ordered to the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron and the Squadron under Captain S. F. DuPont, sailed from Hampton Roads, Virginia on 29 October 1861, enroute the area of Port Royal Sound, North Carolina. On 7 November 1861, the Bienville participated in the attack on Forts Beauregard and Walker, Port Royal Sound, North Carolina, under the command of Commander Charles Steedman. The Bienville was dispatched to Hampton Roads with the official news of the capture of Port Royal Sound. While operating on her blockade station off the mouth of St. John's River, on 11 December 1861, the Bienville chased two schooners. She captured one, the Sarah and Caroline, and drove the other into the breakers. On 15 December while on the same station she ran an unnamed schooner ashore and burned her. The Bienville and Mohican, while off Fernandina,

Florida on 25 February 1862, captured the British schooner Arrow. The following day, the Bienville captured the British schooner Alert. She was attached to the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron until 1863, during which time she captured the British schooner Stettin off Charleston, South Carolina, on 24 May 1862; the British steamer Patras, off Bull's Island, South Carolina, on 27 May 1862; schooners, Providence, Rebecca and La Criolla, off Charleston, on 29 May 1862; schooner Morning Star off Wilmington, North Carolina, on 27 June 1862; schooner Eliza off Charleston, on 21 August 1862; British schooner Louisa off Cape Romain, South Carolina, on 23 August 1862; schooner Lightning off Port Royal, on 9 March 1863.

In 1863 she joined the West Gulf Blockading Squadron and took part in the Battle of Mobile Bay on 5 August 1864 and was later on blockade duty off Galveston, Texas. The blockade-running Pet was taken in Galveston Harbor by a boat crew from the Bienville on 8 February 1865.

The Bienville was sold at Boston, Massachusetts on 5 October 1867.

Bibliography: 501(I, 4,7,10,12-12,16,19-22,27;
II,1):512:502(p.19):09:041:07Vol.2).

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